

# Examiners' Report

## June 2019

### GCE English Language 9EN0 02

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# Introduction

This paper focussed on written language with the data exemplifying a variety of texts produced at school by different children. The question asked candidates to analyse and comment on how the development of language and literacy skills enabled the children to use language for a range of purposes. The expectation was that candidates would combine observations on the language features of the children's literacy development with a context based analysis approach. There were a number of valid approaches to the data set with some candidates analysing and selecting examples from each text in turn. Others chose to focus on a particular feature and used a few pieces of data to illustrate this before moving onto another feature and text selection.

Typically, lower level answers illustrated a lack of confidence with the application of language features and often identified only a very narrow range of issues with little focus on context. Often, the primary focus was on graphological features such as linearity, the use of pictures, and the formation of letters. These were valid areas for consideration, but overlong sections at this level resulted in aspects of a descriptive response. A number of candidates at lower levels spent a significant proportion of their response analysing the teacher's comments and, in some cases, produced a more detailed analysis of these than the child's language. While these too were valid areas of focus, candidates at lower levels allowed them to dominate their responses and did not consider the impact of how these features affected the children's ability to complete their tasks. There was a strong tendency at this level to have little or no analysis of syntax and frequent errors in basic terminology.

Higher levels answers controlled the analysis of areas such as graphology, often covering all relevant features of this area in a paragraph. Candidates at this level were able to apply a wider range of grammatical features to their analysis and terminology was wider ranging and showed fewer errors. Context was generally kept in mind throughout by exploring the function of the texts and how the audience would respond coupled with insightful comments on literacy development. At higher levels, fluent written expression enabled candidates to tie together multiple points and increase the depth and breadth of their response.

Overall, it was clear that centres had worked hard preparing candidates for Component 2 and that the students had learned appropriate areas of children's written language development. Many candidates showed clear linguistic knowledge and there were very few who did not identify at least some issues in the data provided.

## Question 1

Although many candidates seemed to approach the data with some confidence, candidates should be reminded of the necessity to fit their responses to the specific demands of the question. For this year, it was to explain how the children's literacy and language development allowed them to shape language for specific purposes and to explore the ways in which they were successful or showed evidence of still needing to acquire certain skills.

Instead of the expected focus, many at lower levels wrote only on the features of literacy that the children demonstrated and did not acknowledge the type of texts the children were producing. Responses which just identified a list of features/skills that the child had, or had yet to, develop and discussed theories without clear and explicit links to the context were unlikely to achieve higher levels, especially for AO3. Where candidates did focus on the question, there was an increasing sense of understanding about the different genres and forms the children had been asked to produce with a clear focus on how the language was used to give instructions, to recall past events or to make resolutions. Some of the highest scoring candidates effectively identified the impact of the different purposes and the external influences of teaching and even, in some cases, references to Key Stages, OFSTED and other government based educational targets.

As in previous sittings, responses in the lower levels tended to be aware of some common issues/theories underpinning literacy, and although Kroll and Barclay remained popular there were clear signs of candidates controlling these and there were few long narrative accounts. Additionally, at lower levels, candidates often confused speech and writing development and did not seem to be aware that the child's spoken language would be reasonably advanced even for the youngest child in the data set. Lower levels answers often tried to fit the children into the spoken stage of language development and a number made references to early vocabulary development such as using an example of a noun from the data to support the idea that children learn nouns first, even for the older children.

Candidates performing at the mid-levels upward were more careful in their selections and often adapted theories from other parts of the course (such as narrative structure theories) or referenced a wider range of theorists who helped them address context as well as development such as Rothery, Britton and Haliday. A handful even considered the educational goals that a child of Thomas' age would be expected to achieve in school by referencing the Key Stage literacy targets and others used the teacher's feedback to explain the educational focus of the activities.

The analysis of written language often requires at least as much consideration of the influence of phonology as spoken language and candidates need to be keenly aware of the links (or lack of them) between sound and spelling. Although evident to some extent at all levels, there was still much uncertainty regarding the analysis of sound/spelling links in responses placed in the lower levels. Despite the inclusion of an IPA reference sheet, the use of the IPA was not widespread and although fewer candidates tried to rely upon phonetic spelling, it was common at lower levels. Although such candidates typically included a description of the spelling, the infrequent use of the IPA to create links between sound and spelling prevented candidates from showing the accuracy and understanding associated with better responses and made comments that felt descriptive rather than analytical. For instance, many candidates discussed the child's spelling of 'butr', but referenced the use of the 'er' sound instead of using the relevant IPA symbol or just stated that the unstressed syllable had been lost from the child's written representation of tomato. Use of the IPA may have helped candidates demonstrate this sound as a consistent issue of the child's spelling and helped them link it to the spoken language.

Lack of familiarity and/or confidence with the sounds of English and how these may be represented in writing led many candidates at lower levels to inaccurate results. Common examples of this

included claims that the child's use of <t> as a past tense verb inflection in 'dresst' showed non-standard pronunciation and/or a lack of understanding of tense when in fact the child's use of the <t> was indicative of the standard pronunciation. These issues were more clearly understood in the mid to higher levels and there were some insightful explanations that showed clear knowledge of morphology. Additionally, few at lower levels related the children's spelling strategies to how spelling is taught in school and were content to just label spellings as 'phonetic' with no consideration of why children approach spelling in this way. At higher levels, there was more awareness of the different strategies a child may draw upon such as learned spelling or blending. Generally, only those at the higher levels moved beyond exploring phonetic spelling and acknowledged where and why the children could spell successfully and whether the spellings caused any significant barrier to the child's ability to complete the task at hand. Candidates in the mid to higher levels also considered the influence of casual speech and regional accent on the child's spelling and the effect that non-standard forms could have on the audience.

Comments on syntax and morphology at lower levels were either absent or were often limited to observations on development such as 'praising' their use of determiners and lack of telegraphic speech. In a number of instances, simple observations were made without explanations such as noting that the child used irregular past tense forms. There was often little attempt to discuss how the children's use of syntax and morphology in their written pieces allowed them to achieve their purposes. When comments on significant structures were made, some candidates at lower levels lacked the terminology to describe them. Candidates performing in the mid-levels and above were able to offer a greater range of features and had more confidence with terminology. As such, they were able to identify and explain the use of features such as adjectives, adverbials for sequencing, imperatives, aspects of spoken language (such as adjacency pairs for the final text) and some productive analysis on sentence complexity. At these mid to high levels, these were linked to the audience needs and the conventions of the genre. In some instances, candidates grouped together various features of syntax that contributed to the same contextual factor, for instance the various grammatical features that allowed the child to offer description. This was particularly productive.

This extract from a script placed at Level 4 for both AOs shows some productive links between language features and context. The candidate also shows how related areas of syntax can be included in a single section. This candidate has taken a text by text approach to the data, so only comments relating to a single text are seen here.

Text C shows how Sammy is able to produce a piece of text with Halliday's representative function. She is able to use methods of description such as modified noun phrases <big wheel> and <10 b ball>, showing her understanding that extra detail is required in news media to inform those who were not present at the events etc being described. However, it may be argued that these are considered set-phrases to Sammy who has heard them in her environment and reproduced them in the text, therefore displaying evidence of behaviourism theory which suggests that children develop language by copying MKOs. In this case, these phrases are environmental print. Furthermore, Sammy is able to use the subject complement <it was purple> with a standard past tense format. This allows Sammy to add subjective

adjectives to her piece to engage the reader and place a more accurate image in their head, showing that Sammy has been ~~quite~~ successful in achieving the learning objective of producing a piece of news writing.

All three sentences in ~~the~~ text C are simple sentences e.g. <I got a lolo ball>. This gives the text a list-like structure which lacks stylistic variation and is less engaging for a reader. However, the teacher provides praise for Sammy's sentence production so it may be inferred that sentence formation and using full-stops may be a learning objective, in which case would ~~be~~ show success in this area as punctuation is fully standard, despite its limited uses.





After identifying the text they are considering, the candidate references Haliday's representative function. This could have been developed slightly by explaining how the data/specific language feature links to the representative function. The candidate uses accurate linguistic terms (modified Noun Phrase) with two clear examples. The link between this language feature and context is clearly signposted with a comment relating the use to audience (who we are told are not present) and function (to inform). There is evidence of some discriminating understanding when the candidate offers the alternative explanation that the child may not have included this feature purposefully and is just repeating prefabricated phrases they have heard. Although the mention of behaviourism in this context is plausible, environmental print seems a little bit misplaced as the candidate seems to be considering what the child has heard rather than seen. The candidate is able to expand their section by including other related features of syntax that allow description with the reference to subject complement and its similar function. The final comment is evidence of a candidate with a clear focus on answering the question as again the feature is linked to context and a reference to the success of the task in terms of learning objectives is made at the end.

The final section in this extract addresses sentence type. Both the example and terminology are accurate. The candidate moves beyond the feature spotting that often characterised lower levels by stating the effect on the reader of using simple sentences as being 'less engaging' and in doing so are maintaining their links to context. As in the previous section, the candidate offers a contrasting view using evidence from the teacher's feedback and so also shows some discriminating understanding of core issues such as educational learning objectives.

Throughout this section, the written expression is clear, highly efficient and controlled which makes the candidate's response highly accessible.



It is perfectly acceptable to offer a number of explanations for the presence (or absence) of a feature in the data. Discussing a range of reasons for a single example is often a characteristic of a discriminating response and shows thoughtful engagement with the data.



This extract is from a script that achieved High Level 3 for AO1/2 and Low Level 4 for AO3. This borderline response shows analysis of similar features to the first response above (which were some of the most commonly discussed features) and a range of terminology, but does show some lack of development which prevents Mid Level 4.

Text C is an account written by Sammy and because of this she uses past participles of verbs to convey the ~~past~~ past tense, <went> and <got>. These are both irregular verbs however Sammy has written the standard past participle. Also, in contrast to text A, Sammy uses description to add variation to her writing which makes it more engaging for her audience, she uses the objective modifier <purple> to describe the ball. Alongside this she also uses anaphoric referencing when she writes <it> which refers to the ball and this adds grammatical cohesion to her writing. Both of these features suggest Sophie understands the function of an account, to inform and to some extent entertain.

In contrast to text C, text E is a piece of writing that is about the future and therefore Sophie has used ~~modal auxiliary verbs which portray~~ the modal auxiliary verb <will> to show the future tense, and they show an element of certainty. Because it is a New Year's resolution, Sophie understands how to shape her language to inform her audience of what she will do in <2008>, and ~~has~~ the element of certainty shows she is determined to achieve her goals. Also, Sophie uses a compound sentence <...ride my bike and to try...> ~~which is a more complex sentence structure than what she was using in text D.~~ Here, she uses the co-ordinating conjunction <and> to link her ideas together, which is similar to what she did in text D as she uses conjunctions such as <first> and <then> in order to link her instructions together and create chronology.



The candidate identifies past tense and there is an implied link to context with the comment '...is an account...because of this...' but it is not explicit. Although the candidate notices the verb forms are irregular, they do not state why this is relevant. The candidate could have developed this with a quick link to ease of audience understanding and perhaps have speculated briefly on their development in the child's spoken language. Further evidence of correct identification is found in the comment about the modifier 'purple'. Again, context (the function of the text) is considered with a few brief statements (adds variation and makes the text engaging) which is enough to show understanding and a suitably focussed response, but the concept of 'variation' is a little vague.

The section continues with another useful identification which also clearly relates to literacy development - the anaphoric referencing. The final sentence sums up and maintains a focus on aspects of context, but these points could have been developed.

The following section contrasts the treatment of tense in the previous section and shows some ability to make effective transitions between sections. There is further evidence of accurate terminology and the link between future certainty and resolutions shows a slightly more developed awareness of context than the previous section. It is a shame that the candidate did not expand on the notion of 'inform'.

There is some lack of development at the end where a compound sentence is identified and, although the candidate's explanation that this links ideas is accurate, they could have taken this a step further and explained why 'linking ideas' is a relevant development for this type of writing. The final sentence does pick up on a valid language example but as these are not conjunctions, the candidates comparison of linking features is not wholly convincing.



Don't just identify a feature. Use your linguistic knowledge to speculate about why it is present. For instance, you should consider whether it relates to context or development and why it is important in relation to the data and the question you are answering.

This extract is from a script that achieved Level 4 for both AOs and illustrates some productive discussion of spelling issues. This section is concerned with Text B.

Thomas has demonstrated through literacy that he can write for a purpose and follow teachers instructions. The use of instructive lexical verbs such as "put" and "cut" proves he understands the concept of producing a clear guide to making the 'salad wick' where using "butter" and "sprinkle" adds specific detail to his ~~the~~ dish. Thomas also uses a line-by-line structure and numbers to separate each step, making his work abide to

Grice's maxim of manner where the instructions are set out clearly and methodologically so the reader can make their own 'salad wish.' This theory ~~the~~ implies that Thomas is able to successfully create instructions.

Thomas has shown examples of segmenting words. This is an aspect of 'Jolly Phonics' which is a multi-sensory system to aid written language. Segmenting, is 'sounding out' to link phonemes to graphemes. Tricky words and blending are also reinforced. "letis" "cheez" and "peep" are all spelled non-standardly as Thomas has used the segmenting technique. However, Jolly phonics must be criticised here as it doesn't account for double consonants such as in 'lettuce' (the standard for 'letis') or final <e> in 'cheese' (the standard for 'cheez'.) The same ~~f pattern~~ can be found in 'sprinkle' and 'bread' where the child does not understand the difference between the <ck> <ck> and <ck>

structures and the <ea> in <ea> for 'bread.' This is because the English spelling system uses an alphabet where sound does not represent spelling, causing confusion for children, like Thomas, and people learning the language.



The opening sentence implies that the candidate will focus on the question and consider context rather than produce a general developmental response. The terminology 'instructive lexical verbs' and examples are relevant and useful, although it may have been more productive to move above the level of word class and to focus on the use of the imperative sentence mood. The comment on butter and sprinkle 'adding detail' is a little general. This candidate could have expanded this idea to show a more discriminating knowledge of the link between language features and context by discussing how these verbs are often specific to the semantic field of food preparation. They could also have noted the importance of specific details in instructional texts as well as considering how Thomas has developed these terms. Graphology receives a suitably brief comment and although the link to Grice has some plausibility, the comment noting that the layout makes the texts clearer and more methodical is more focussed on context.

As the candidate moves on to spelling, they briefly reference the phonics teaching method. Despite all candidates mentioning spelling in some form, very few considered specifically how spelling is taught (preferring instead to just describe the child's approach as 'phonetic') and explained how teaching methods may influence the child's approach. Valid examples are used to support the discussion. There is evidence of discriminating understanding with a criticism of Jolly phonics. More effective use of the IPA to explain how the child had linked sound and spelling would have made this section clearer. The candidate shows some detailed knowledge of the different categories of words learned within the phonics system by mentioning segmenting, blending and tricky words but could have related these to some specific examples. They could also have briefly considered whether the spelling formed a barrier to reader understanding.



Showing understanding of core theories or more general issues and concepts that underpin literacy development can help you explain why children exhibit certain characteristics in their writing. Remember to briefly explain the relevancy of any language issues and concepts that you introduce in the course of your analysis. To show a more discriminating and critical application of theories and concepts, you should attempt to both support and identify issues with the theories that you have studied.



This short extract has been included to show a productive approach to lexical analysis. Few candidates considered lexis in their response and often at lower levels, the account was somewhat descriptive. This candidate manages to move it in a more analytical direction. This candidate shows a different approach from the previous examples included within in this report by comparing texts side by side. This was equally valid and there was no expectation that candidates would compare all six texts for each feature they discussed.

Additionally, a development in language can be seen through lexis choices throughout all the texts. This can be seen by ~~It~~ in text B written by Thomas (aged 5 years and 5 months) in step 3 "put on radish" here Thomas has chosen to add the ingredient radish to his sandwich which is low frequency to



someone of his age and suggests he has been influenced by environmental print as he has more than likely seen somebody else eat a sandwich with this ingredient on or has eaten it himself. Furthermore, Thomas' lexical choices allow the instructions to become more descriptive shown in step S "spricl the cheez" <sup>although</sup> ~~attow~~ spelt incorrectly, Thomas has used the dynamic verb 'sprinkle' rather than 'put' or 'place' when describing how to add the cheese in order to make his writing more descriptive and allows it to become more visual. Moreover, in text F, Jacob also shows interesting signs of lexical choices shown in the utterance "Is it King George the VI?" Here ~~th~~ Jacob has written the <sup>lower frequency</sup> Roman numerals 'VI' rather than write 'sixth' suggesting he has been influenced by environmental print or has been scaffolded to do so by his teacher which supports Brown and Bruner's social theory. In text D,



The candidate expresses themselves with clarity throughout. It is worth mentioning that there is no need to use valuable time repeating the child's age unless relevant to the particular point. In this instance, a quick reference to Text B would have sufficed. A discriminating example is selected and it is entirely plausible to refer to this as 'low frequency' but the link to environmental print is unlikely as this term only refers to seeing written language in the environment – instead it is more probable that the child has encountered this term in spoken language as the candidate points out.

The comment on 'sprinkle' is far more convincing and the speculation about the alternatives such as 'put' makes the candidate's point clearer. The link to context is clear in that it makes the instructions more precise for the reader. It would have benefitted the candidate to consider where the child would have developed these verbs and to have related it more specifically to their growing ability to use a wider range of lexis in their spoken language.

The next reference to environmental print is more convincing as there is a clear difference between graphology and phonology for regnal number and the additional reference to this being influenced by education shows some ability to consider valid alternate concepts that underpin literacy.



You should always consider aspects of context when analysing child language as this is a specific assessment objective (AO3) and it may feature as a specific focus of the question. For written data, you should consider the language features that the child has used that link to function and audience. This could include how they have adapted their syntax for the purpose or whether their spelling and graphology affects their ability to convey meaning in the written language. You should also consider whether the environment in which the child is writing has an effect on their language use.

This brief extract has been included to illustrate the characteristics of Low Level 3. In this response, the focus on context is not as developed as those above and although some terminology and examples are used, the written expression is not as sophisticated.

In regards to morphology, there is evidence of an understanding of tenses. In text C, the 5 year old child, ~~is~~ wrote in her book about an experience she had had.

~~This is a very good example of a child who has a good understanding of tenses.~~ In this text, the child uses tense modifiers such as,

"went", "got" and "was". The use of these particular words, showing an understanding of past tense, could be due to an MKO teaching them it in a school environment, as well as the national curriculum, however, it could also be argued that the child has an innate ~~the~~ knowledge on tenses, through having an innate 'LAD', linking to Chomsky's theory. The understanding of tenses is consistent, as seen in text F, whereas the 8 year old child writes in present tense in this text instead. This is shown by the use of the words "am", "have" and "will". It can be seen here that the use of present tense in this text is consistent throughout, as is the orthography + discourse.

The candidate introduces tense but there is some unusual terminology (tense modifiers) that may indicate a lack of confident understanding. There is an implied and vague link to context with the comment ‘...experiences she had’ but beyond this the candidate does not speculate as to why it is important. Clear examples are given, but the focus seems to be simply developmental, rather than exploring how this development relates to the child’s ability to produce suitable school based tasks. The candidate shows some awareness of how spoken language may influence written language development and is capable of offering some contrasting views as to how the child developed irregular forms, but both the idea that they were taught them in school or that they are innate is quite simplistic. They are able to briefly contrast this with the other texts, but context comments are not present so the relevance of discussing tense is lost.

This extract from a High Level 4 response shows some discriminating analysis and a very efficient style, using discriminating examples that allow them to cover a number of issues. This candidate prevents their spelling analysis lapsing into a developmental response with some clear links to context. The sophisticated written expression makes the analysis highly accessible and there are some brief, but effective, links to core concepts and issues.

through a program such as Jolly Phonics. Text D by Sophie displays a greater degree of confidence in producing an informative text, primarily through the consistent use of adverbials of time, such as <First> and <after>, in order to implement chronology into the piece. This seems to make it easier to follow for her teacher, which is commonly expected from instructive pieces, as by expecting them to be followed in an order is imperative in their function. However, some inconsistencies don't hinder this ability to follow the piece, such as Sophie's non-standard inflections, such as <-t> to show past tense in <dress>. This displays Sophie's reliance on blending and sequencing, as the <-t> suffix characterises the verb's phonological production as /drest/, with the alveolar plosive /t/ being commonly used in spoken English to show past tense. This is commonly applied

by children at around 6-7 years, as a Key Stage 1 target at this age is regularly to use spoken language to assist in producing unfamiliar words. Doing so, Sophie does not fail to meet the informative function of the piece, as it can still be deciphered from the non-standard form that it refers to past-tense. Sophie shows her ability to apply the pattern, through applying <-ed> in the non-standard <pauced>, but here does not apply the standard <ck> to refer to the velar plosive /k/. Though it does show grapheme-phoneme correspondence between <ck> and </k/. The lack of learned spelling prevents her from ~~advancing~~ <sup>advancing</sup> her linguistic stage of development, and draws comparisons to Text B's likewise reliance on phonetic spelling. For the noun <clevis>, non-standard for <cleave>, the <ss> grapheme applied in place of the <ce> digraph for the alveolar fricative /s/ makes the piece lose accuracy, and until a wider range of spellings are learned, both children will hamper their literacy's application, making pieces harder to read and understood by their audience.





The discussion of adverbials of time shows precise and accurate terminology and a clear ability to link language features to the construction of meaning. This candidate expressly considers the effect of the language features on both the audience (the teacher) and the function (instructive pieces). The candidate keeps a close focus on the question by considering aspects that they feel may affect the child's ability to meet the demands of the task by considering a potential barrier in terms of spelling and is showing clear discriminating application. The sophisticated written expression and use of key terms associated with phonology shows a detailed understanding of the differences between spoken and written English. The writer shows some detailed awareness of underpinning issues by linking the non-standard tense representation to Key Stage targets. The candidate is able to close this exploration of potential barriers to understanding by noting that meaning is not lost and so maintains a focus on context. In the final part of this extract, the candidate shows a typical approach found at higher levels of looking for patterns/ similar features to support or contrast a previous point and here the candidate examines another verb form ('paked') to show the child's ability to use standard past tense. To take this one focussed response one step further, they could have noted the different phonology of this example. The candidate uses the tense ending discussion to move into another feature that the child exhibits – confusion around <ck> and <k>. The candidate shows some detailed understanding of phonology by using the IPA to note the connection between sound and spelling. The response finishes with a further example of phonetic spelling and a summative comment that prevents the analysis just being developmental by bringing the response back around to the focus question – the children's ability to produce effective texts.



Whether you are examining a single piece of data or several, looking carefully for patterns of use of a particular feature or example can allow you to make more discriminating comments on a child's stage of development and/or the influence of context. If you have to examine more than one piece of data, an integrated analysis is often more efficient than discussing each text in separate sections, but any approach that allows you to show depth of understanding is valid.



## Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- make sure you read the question carefully and follow its demands
- context is always referenced in the AO grids and should always be discussed
- some brief planning before you start to write may allow you to decide what features best enable you to cover a range of language features and issues/concepts. It can also help timing by allowing you to order your analysis so that you cover the most important points first
- avoid 'feature spotting' by always relating a language feature to a language development issue and/or contextual factors
- keep your focus firmly on the data and introduce issues associated with literacy development only when they are relevant to the discussion of a specific example within the data
- if you are going to reference a theory associated with child development, you should briefly explain it (to demonstrate your understanding) and its relevance to the data. If relevant, use the data to refute any of the theories you have studied
- develop your knowledge of relevant phonological terminology and the IPA to avoid errors in your analysis
- take care with your written expression, including use of capital letters, and avoid colloquialisms in your writing
- although you will likely refer to issues such as the child's age and where the texts were produced in the course of your analysis, there is no need to reproduce the contextual information given in the source booklet at the start of your response
- if you have time, check your work for errors in terminology.

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